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681 sanction of the recognized marriage ceremonies were ostracized to
684 the extent of having to live outside of the village stockade or, if
736 they belonged to a community living in a single village-house, they were required to occupy a room detached from the main building.
681 The two other classes of ostracized persons, namely, widows and
761 orphans, were supposed to have incurred the displeasure of their "Bgha," and it was feared that their misfortune would become con-
774 tagious if they were allowed to remain in the village. That is, the "Bgha" of other families would imitate the "Bgha" of the widows' and orphans' families in eating the "k'las" of other husbands and parents, thus depriving the village of more of its members. It was believed that this danger could be avoided by driving the bereft ones into the jungle to shift for themselves. The added risk of the future marriage of these baneful persons was taken into account. This was perhaps negligible in the case of the widows, but the orphans should not be allowed to grow up with other children to become in time eligible for marriage with them. Left to range through the jungle, such orphans, if they survived, generally developed a daring and resourcefulness that inspired the ordinary folk of the village with wonder. Their deeds came to be thought of
[741] as due to a supernatural power. In short, they were believed to be magicians.[4]

Family Relationships

595 In the chapter on Marriage Customs mention is made of the
587 general chastity of the Karen and of their monogamous marriages within the tribe. The rule is for a man to have one wife; but now and then a secondary wife or concubine, known as a "ma po tha," is supported. It may be that on account of the childlessness of the first wife the new connection has been entered into for the sake of offspring, or that the man has simply followed his own inclinations in the matter. Such unions are effected without the formality of marriage ceremonies and are not recognized by Karen society, being entirely irregular.

584 Westerners, accustomed as they are to doing their own courting, sometimes wonder how happy marriages can be effected in the case of young men and women who are strangers and have never met perhaps till they come together in the marriage chamber. We must remember, however, that with a people like the Karen the physical relationship is more significant than the spiritual. Senti-

[4] See Chapter XXVI, pp. 269-270.

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resorted to are reputed to stimulate the growth of tumors, thick membranes, or bones in the bowels of a person and thus effect his premature death. It was reported to me that one sorcerer demonstrated his destructive power by coaxing a squirrel to come near and hitting it with a betel quid upon which he had blown, whereupon the little animal fell dead. The man telling me of this experiment had not witnessed it, but learned of it from one who had. The practice of magic by the blowing method is attributed to a certain man, named Saw Hteu (a famous prophet), who was gashed severely by a wild boar in the chase. The prophet blew and spat on the wounds, which healed immediately. It was said that the mastery of this method could be gained only through instruction from its author. It is a method that can be used either for good or evil purposes. Those who apply it in doing harm are often called false prophets ("wi a' bla") and are greatly feared by those Karens who are still deep in ignorance and superstition. Dr. Wade thinks this blowing charm is of Talaign origin, which is very likely, for it is used by all the peoples in Burma and is probably a survival of the old demon-worship, which still remains powerful despite centuries of Buddhist teaching.[4]

A well-known method of wrecking vengeance on an enemy, but one that would be used only by the most craven wizzard, is that of invoking the action of the skull of a corpse that had been left unburied. During the daytime the skull appears to be harmless enough; but at night, if magical lore is to be credited, it takes on the complete similitude of a wretched man, a kind of retributive agent, ready to be sent on a mission of murder. Another familiar method of doing evil to a person is to take a piece of his clothing, a lock of his hair, or even some of the dust from his foot-prints and, after blowing the baleful breath on whatever has been taken, to make a little image of him, stick a feather in the bottom of it, and hang it on a tree. When the wind swings this manikin to and fro, the mind of the person it represents will begin to give way, becoming capricious and unsettled. The imparting of bad luck is also accomplished by secreting a fragment of a monstrous woman's skirt in the pillow of the hated individual. I heard of a wife who did this out of spite to her husband, who had taken unto himself another woman. The result of her action was all that could have been desired, for the man finally died.

[4] *The Karen Thesaurus*, new ed., Vol. I, p. 448.